

Human genetic studies in dire need of racial, ethnic diversity

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

Keolu Fox is a man on a mission – he wants to overhaul the study of genes, which is increasingly revolutionising medicine, and find out why Polynesians and other indigenous groups are dying at faster rates than many other groups.

As a native Hawaiian, he has special interest in the second and as a medic is shocked by the fact that most of those who have so far contributed to the study of human genes are of European descent.

The Human Genome Project, which set out to identify and map all of the genes in a human body was completed in 2003 and since then there has been an explosion in the way medicine has used genetic sequencing to help treat and identify diseases.

“I started to study those things and I noticed some staggering trends. 96% of people who have their genes sequenced are of European ancestry,” said Mr Fox.

“That means that the future of medicine, moving towards using genome sequencing as a tool for prediction, prevention and personalisation of disease and treatments is not going to include minority people. You begin to set the scene for social stratification, and the gap in health disparities will widen.”

Mr Fox, who is a fifth year PhD student at University of Washington, is at TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) to talk about his new project IndiGenomics and he is particularly excited about a small box that he pulls out of his pocket on the stage.

Read full, original post: [TED 2016: The man making genes democratic](#)